

The Heppner
GAZETTE-TIMES
VIEWPOINT

*Yes, Virginia,
there is a Santa Claus*



One of the most famous newspaper editorials of all time has to do with Christmas. It first appeared September 21, 1897, in the pages of a leading newspaper of the day, the New York Sun.

Virginia O'Hanlon, eight years old, was torn between the doubts placed in her mind by playmates and her own sincere belief that each Christmas a jolly old man came to help spread joy through the world. To settle the matter, she posed the question to the editor of the Sun.

Francis Pharcellus Church replied as follows:



"Is there a Santa Claus?"
"We take pleasure in answering at once and thus prominently the communication below, expressing at the same time our great gratification that its faithful author is numbered among the friends of the Sun."

"Dear editor:
"I am 8 years old.
Some of my little friends say there is no Santa Claus.
Papa says 'If you see it in the Sun it's so.'
Please tell me the truth, is there a Santa Claus?
Virginia O'Hanlon
115 West 95th Street



"Virginia, your little friends are wrong. They have been affected by the skepticism of a skeptical age. They do not believe except what they see. They think that nothing can be which is not comprehensible by their little minds. All minds, Virginia, whether they be men's or children's, are little. In this great universe of ours man is a mere insect, an ant, in his intellect, as compared with the boundless world about him, as measured by the intelligence capable of grasping the whole of truth and knowledge.

"Yes, Virginia, there is a Santa Claus. He exists as certainly as love and generosity and devotion exist, and you know that they abound and give to your life its highest beauty and joy. Alas! how dreary would be the world if there were no Santa Claus! It would be as dreary as if there were no Virginias. There would be no childlike faith then, no poetry, no romance to make tolerable their existence. We should have no enjoyment, except in sense and sight. The eternal light with which childhood fills the world would be extinguished.

Not believe in Santa Claus! You might as well not believe in fairies! You might get your Papa to hire men to watch in all the chimneys on Christmas Eve to catch Santa Claus, but even if they did not see Santa Claus coming down, what would that prove? Nobody sees Santa Claus, but that is no sign that there is no Santa Claus. The most real things in the world are those that neither children nor men can see. Did you ever see fairies dancing on the lawn? Of course not, but that's no proof that they are not there. Nobody can conceive or imagine all the wonders there are unseen and unseeable in the world.

"You tear apart the baby's rattle and see what makes the noise inside, but there is a veil covering the unseen world which not the strongest man, not even the united strength of all the strongest men that ever lived, could tear apart. Only faith, fancy, poetry, love, romance, can push aside the curtain and view and picture the supernatural beauty and glory beyond. Is it all real? Ah, Virginia, in all this world there is nothing else real and abiding.

"No Santa Claus! Thank God he lives, and he lives forever. A thousand years from now, Virginia, nay, ten times ten thousand years from now, he will continue to make glad the heart of childhood."



LETTERS

Justify costs before raising water rates

Editor:

About a week ago, Mayor Sweeney was quoted in the East Oregonian as noting that city water rates would probably go up this spring because "everything goes up." The point, Mr. Mayor, is that this country is battling inflation that is at least partly due to arbitrary and unjustified price and salary increases. Inflation cannot be slowed if all suppliers of goods and services increase prices simply because it seems the thing to do.

I would hope that the mayor and the council do not increase rates unless they are able to establish that the increase is justified in terms of costs for the city water delivery system. I do not object to paying for services: I do object to an increase if it is not shown to be necessary.

I assume that such a decision will not be made without opportunity for public participation in the discussion. The public should be notified when this problem is placed on the agenda of a regular council meeting.

Sincerely,
Linda A. Shaw

Pastor gives thanks for community support

Editor:

On behalf of the many who will be helped by the people of Heppner, Ione and Lexington's generous support of the Seventh-day Adventist's World Service Appeal, we of the local Seventh-day Adventist Church wish to extend to you our heartfelt thanks. Your contributions will do much to help relieve physical and spiritual needs both close to home and around the world.

Weather permitting, Saturday night, December 23, we will once again be singing Christmas carols in the Heppner area, but this time it will be without any thought of soliciting money. This is an added way of saying, "Thank you!"

Merry Christmas,
Bill Poole
Pastor

Agriculture Board urges Columbia irrigation plans

The State Board of Agriculture has this week urged state water resources policymakers to reserve a suitable amount of Columbia River water for irrigation purposes.

The action, taken Wednesday, December 13, at the panel's winter meeting in Bend, specifically urges the Water Policy Review Board to adopt a reservation of water from the river. The aim is to spur irrigation development in the North Columbia Basin, where estimates show an additional million acres of land to be suitable for expanded agriculture uses.

That expansion, however, could only come about through irrigation.

The state of Washington already has entered the water reservation area by setting aside 1.36 million acre feet of water for irrigation purposes in the Horse Heaven Hills.

Director of Agriculture Leonard Kunzman told members of the board that the expansion of irrigated land in the Columbia Basin is important to agricultural growth.

"We have already seen the extremely beneficial impacts of irrigation along the basin. Expansion of irrigation not only means an improvement to agricultural producers, but to the entire state economy which is dependent on agriculture," he said.

Anti-shoplifting bill merits action by Legislature

Security personnel halted two suspicious individuals leaving a major Salem department store during the height of this year's Christmas shopping season.

Special pockets and slits in coats they were wearing contained \$1,100 worth of merchandise. Their car in the store parking lot revealed another \$14,000 worth of goods—much still bearing price tags.

Both were charged with theft and lodged in jail. The incident appears to

involve apprehension of professional shoplifters and is quickly dismissed by most readers of newspaper accounts. But such activity is only the tip of the shoplifting iceberg and the remaining vast bulk of this growing crime against society likely will produce proposals for new laws when the Oregon Legislature convenes in the capital city on Jan. 8.

Anti-shoplifting bills were introduced during both the 1975 and 1977 sessions of the Legislature but died in com-

Salem Scene

By Jack Zimmerman

mittee.

Nevertheless, the same type of legislation appears destined to re-appear in 1979. And it won't be directed against professional boosters. Oregon law already deals sufficiently with thieves who steal goods valued at \$200 or more.

The new proposals will be aimed at so-called petty

thieves, who shoplift merchandise of much lesser value. Despite the sizeable sum represented by the merchandise found in possession of the pair arrested in Salem, Activity by professional shoplifters accounts for only five per cent of the value of such stolen goods nationally.

Total annual cost of shoplift-

ing nationwide is estimated at \$6.5 billion. Law enforcement agencies figure the pros account for about 5 per cent, drug addicts perhaps 10 per cent, adult amateurs maybe 35 per cent and juveniles—50 per cent!

New laws to be proposed in Salem will deal with offenders responsible for the largest share of perpetrators—amateur adults and juveniles. And the proposed laws won't be criminal statutes. They will seek civil redress.

Most western states already have enacted laws that permit civil proceedings against shoplifters and sponsors will ask Oregon to follow suit. The civil procedure in essence is designed to make it safer and more practical for merchants—large and small—to detain a suspected shoplifter, prosecute and recover damages covering costs of stolen articles and inconvenience.

Technically, most shoplifting consists of stealing merchandise valued at less than \$200. Oregon law now calls such crimes theft-two, theft in the second degree—a class-A misdemeanor, punishable by fines of up to \$1,000 and imprisonment for not longer than a year.

But only a fraction of this type of shoplifting is prosecuted under the criminal statute. Unless a business is large

enough to employ professional security personnel, it becomes prohibitive to prosecute petty theft under the criminal statutes. Few small store owners can afford to absent themselves from their businesses long enough to participate in a criminal prosecution, let alone leave the store long enough to file a criminal complaint.

Without trained security personnel, few merchants are willing to detain suspected shoplifters for fear of liability for false arrest. And in both cases, there are legal fees to be considered and balanced against the loss of a low-priced article of merchandise.

These factors and others have combined to produce growing pressures for civil remedies for a crime that is growing at an estimated 35 per cent each year.

And the growth of this type of crime likely provides the greatest pressure of all. At present, those most interested in achieving more productive civil procedures against shoplifters appear to favor a statute paralleling the State of Washington's civil shoplifting law, which became effective in September, 1975.

Basically, that law allows the victim (retail merchant) to recover actual value of stolen goods, and sums as high as \$1,200 for adults and emancipated minors. Parents

**Sifting through
the TIMES**



Sheriff-elect Clarence Bauman was in Portland 50 years ago this week, to receive instruction on law enforcement procedures prior to his taking office in January. Meanwhile, incumbent Sheriff George McDuffee was minding the local law and order scene, locating in Heppner a car that had been stolen from Onalaska, Wash. The outgoing Sheriff's son, Howard, a deputy on the force, spent part of the week in Portland, taking civil service tests, in order to obtain a job as a Prohibition enforcement officer, before the courthouse shuffle in January took place.

Pendleton hide and pelt buyer Max Gorfkle was in town to purchase the fruits of local trappers' labors, and Frank Wilkinson of Heppner was trying to find the owner of two black hogs he found wandering along Willow Creek near the old McCullough place.

During the same week a half-century ago, roughly 60 per cent of the 1928 Ione area wheat harvest remained in bins and elevators, as farmers waited for an increase in price.

Edward Chinn, owner-operator of the Elkhorn Restaurant in Heppner, was confined to his bed in an effort to fight off an attack of Spanish influenza, a disease which County Extension Agent Charles Smith had just shaken off, after spending 10 days in the hospital.

Health officials had no sure-fire treatment for the disease. A news release from the Oregon Board of Health appearing in the Gazette-Times 50 years ago recommended that those suffering symptoms of the disease "take a laxative and a glass of hot lemonade and go to bed early... Isolate yourself, do not kiss or even shake hands."

Sixty years ago this week, while Frank Gilliam of Heppner was chopping kindling wood outside his home, his axe deflected off an overhead clothesline causing Gilliam to lop off his thumb on the downswing. Gilliam gathered up the severed thumb, and brought it to Dr. A.D. McMurdo's office, where the physician re-attached the thumb to its hand, using nine stitches.

Twenty-five years ago this week, many Heppnerites were clearing mud and debris from their yards and basements. A cloudburst accompanied by high winds had swept into the city, causing flooding in side canyons between hills on the western side of the city. Hardest hit were homes along Morgan, Gale and Willow Streets. A three-inch layer of silt was dumped on the garage section of Heppner City Hall, and mud thoroughly covered the lawn and porch of the Merle Burkenbine home.

The rain swollen creeks brought special worries to three sets of Heppner parents, whose children were missing while floodwaters raged. Ricky Johnston, Gary Ball and Brad White, all four years old, had wandered off to explore the hillsides along the northwestern section of town. The trio was found safe and sound that afternoon near the Heppner Lumber Company by Fred Hoskins. Lexington pilot Gar Leyva had joined in the search, flying along hillsides and creek banks in search of the boys, whom their parents feared might have fallen into Willow Creek.

Ten years ago this week, 14-year-old Bruce Kandle of Kinzua was declared the winner of Kinzua Corporation's annual "Porky" contest, in which entrants tried to snuff out the lives of as many tree-damaging porcupines as possible in the course of a year.

Kandle bagged a total of 160 of the spiny critters to take top honors, good for a .22 automatic rifle and plenty of ammo. First runner-up was 13-year-old Jim Benson of Kinzua with 90 confirmed kills. The contest was not limited to boys, as demonstrated by Susie White, 13, of Camp Five, who was responsible for 48 "porkies" biting the dust during 1968.

Last year this week, the Morrow County Search and Rescue Posse found itself \$200 richer. The parents of a 15-year-old Portland boy sent the money and a Christmas card in appreciation for the Posse's efforts in locating the youth in October, when he became lost in the Blake Springs area. The youth, Mike Miller, had crashed his motorcycle in a ditch in an isolated area, and collapsed on a back road after trying to walk out of the area. It was there that he was found by two young hunters who contacted posse search officials.

and guardians of minors are liable for retail value, plus damages up to \$700.

Under Washington's new law the restrictions against detaining suspected shoplifters have been eased and much civil procedure can be conducted in that state's Small Claims Court without incurring attorney fees.

No one seriously concerned about shoplifting believes laws alone will provide a complete deterrent to a crime

that rivals inflation for raising prices in the marketplace. Any new law likely will have

to be accompanied by a program of near-constant public education.

But as one surveys rising prices and the growth of a crime that drives those prices ever higher because merchants must alter price tags to cover their losses, the time for a new shoplifting law in Oregon may occur in 1979.



SUBSCRIPTION RATE

\$8.00 in Morrow, Umatilla, Wheeler & Gilliam County; \$10.00 elsewhere



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